

Date: September 5, 2013

To: Edmonton Zone
Physicians, Nurses, Laboratory Directors and Managers

From: AHS Laboratory Services – Edmonton Zone

Re: Change to Potassium Reference Range in Edmonton Zone Acute Care Hospitals and Health Centres

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Key Messages:

- **Effective September 24, 2013** - the adult reference range for plasma potassium performed in acute care hospitals and health centres (listed in the table below) will change to: **3.3 – 4.8 mmol/L**.
- The adult reference range for serum potassium will remain at **3.5 – 5.0 mmol/L**.
- This change will align the potassium reference ranges in acute care labs with those already in use at the Royal Alexandra Hospital and University of Alberta Hospital.

Edmonton Zone laboratory locations affected by this change	
Cross Cancer Institute	Leduc Community Hospital
Devon General Hospital	Misericordia Community Hospital
East Edmonton Health Centre	Northeast Community Health Centre
Fort Saskatchewan Community Hospital	Redwater Health Centre
Grey Nuns Community Hospital	Sturgeon Community Hospital
Westview Health Centre – Stony Plain	

Note: University of Alberta Hospital and Royal Alexandra Hospital are not affected by this change.

Why this is important:

Intracellular potassium is released from platelets during clot formation. As a result, serum potassium concentrations are 0.2 to 0.5 mmol/L higher than plasma potassium concentrations. The new adult reference range of 3.3 – 4.8 mmol/L more accurately reflects potassium concentrations found in Lithium Heparin plasma samples.

Action Required:

- Pay careful attention to the reference range reported with a potassium result.

For additional questions contact:

- Dr. Anna Fuezery, Regional Clinical Chemist, Edmonton Zone at: 780-735-5658 or email: anna.fuezery@albertahealthservices.ca

This bulletin has been reviewed and approved by:

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